

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 43

Introduced by Assembly Member Chesbro
(Coauthors: Senators Evans and Monning)

April 9, 2014

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 43—Relative to California shellfish.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 43, as introduced, Chesbro. California shellfish.

This measure would state that the Legislature supports ensuring a clean and healthy marine environment to protect existing shellfish beds and access to additional acreage for shellfish farming and restoration, and further supports a dialogue between industry, environmental, and federal and state agency leaders to develop an improved permitting process that is efficient and economical for both shellfish restoration and commercial farming.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, The California Shellfish Initiative (Initiative) is a
- 2 collaborative effort of growers, regulators, nongovernmental
- 3 organizations, and scientists to restore and expand California’s
- 4 shellfish resources, including oysters, mussels, clams, abalone,
- 5 and scallops; and
- 6 WHEREAS, The Initiative’s goals are to protect and enhance
- 7 our marine habitats, foster environmental quality, increase jobs,
- 8 encourage interagency coordination and communication, and
- 9 strengthen coastal economies; and

1 WHEREAS, In California, over 90 percent of our seafood is
2 imported and over 60 percent of our shellfish are supplied, mostly
3 by air transport, from other states; and

4 WHEREAS, Many coastal communities with estuarine resources
5 and working waterfronts are working to measure and predict how
6 changing socioeconomic and environmental factors, including
7 climate change, will affect their future; and

8 WHEREAS, These communities seek a balance between
9 protecting and restoring their marine and estuarine habitats while
10 also maintaining a local economy. These communities could greatly
11 benefit from a coordinated effort to promote sustainable shellfish
12 aquaculture production in a manner that achieves both desired
13 goals in conformance with California’s strong environmentally
14 protective laws and policies; and

15 WHEREAS, California has an enormous opportunity to create
16 living-wage jobs in coastal communities, improve water quality,
17 and restore important ecosystem functions through expansion of
18 sustainable shellfish farming and habitat restoration; and

19 WHEREAS, Public demand for local shellfish has risen
20 dramatically in recent decades, and worldwide, demand for farmed
21 seafood has never been greater, as global farmed aquaculture
22 exceeded beef production for the first time in 2012; and

23 WHEREAS, California is the third-largest shellfish consuming
24 state in the United States, and state production meets less than half
25 of this demand, contributing to a state and national seafood trade
26 deficit and a lost opportunity for economic growth; and

27 WHEREAS, California could lead the nation to meet an ever
28 growing shellfish demand while creating environmentally
29 sustainable “blue jobs” in coastal communities; and

30 WHEREAS, California could increase competitiveness in the
31 national and global aquaculture economy and encourage shellfish
32 restoration projects while ensuring proper protection of its valued
33 coastlines and estuaries; and

34 WHEREAS, A successful Initiative will engage coastal
35 stakeholders in a comprehensive process to grow California’s \$25
36 million sustainable shellfish harvest, restore natural shellfish reefs,
37 protect clean water, and enhance healthy watersheds, in
38 conformance with California’s laws and policies; and

39 WHEREAS, The Initiative can utilize the state’s Geoportal and
40 other state-of-the-art planning tools to involve the public and

1 evaluate the opportunities and challenges for new shellfish
2 operations and restoration areas along California's coastal and
3 offshore ocean waters. The Initiative supports the completion and
4 approval of a Marine Aquaculture Programmatic Environmental
5 Impact Report, currently being prepared by the Department of Fish
6 and Wildlife, which will identify and address any environmental
7 impacts of expanded shellfish production in the state; now,
8 therefore, be it

9 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
10 *California, jointly*, That the Legislature supports ensuring a clean
11 and healthy marine environment to protect existing shellfish beds
12 and access to additional acreage for shellfish farming and
13 restoration, and further supports a dialogue between industry,
14 environmental, and federal and state agency leaders to develop an
15 improved permitting process that is efficient and economical for
16 both shellfish restoration, and commercial farming; and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
18 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
19 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
20 President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, and to each
21 Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the
22 United States.